

# POLITICAL BOOKNOTES

**After Brezhnev.** Robert F. Byrnes, ed. *Indiana University*, \$25/\$12.

**The American Opportunity.** Edwin Hartrich. *Macmillan*, \$17.95. Hartrich, an international business consultant and former *Wall Street Journal* reporter, has written an accessible, educational survey of development policy in scores of postwar economies. His prescription for U.S. policy is a generally conservative one: America should promote economic expansion only in those Third World countries committed to free enterprise, basic agricultural development, and small, "mutually beneficial" industrial projects.

—Richard Meyer

**A Conspiracy So Immense: The World of Joe McCarthy.** David M. Oshinsky. *Free Press*, \$19.95.

**Dangerous Currents.** Lester Thurow. *Random House*, \$16.95. Thurow offers no sweeping theories about the cause of America's economic decline, no detailed policy agenda for the future. What he does offer—a description of the myths and false assumptions that underlie much of conventional economics—makes this a satisfying and invaluable book.

Thurow demonstrates how a major building block of economic theory—the "equilibrium price-action model" by which markets for products and labor supposedly adjust themselves by price—is fundamentally flawed. Businesses often compete with quality and service; a worker can't sell his services for \$6 an hour if a prospective employer already is paying \$12 to his other employees. Yet rather than abandon the model, Thurow describes how many economists construct convoluted explanations in a vain effort to compensate for economic reality.

Thurow doesn't present an alternative but his analysis is convincing. Two sections of the book stand out. The first is his demonstration of how supply-side economics, rather than being the "voodoo economics"

that liberals deride it as, shares the same logical fallacies as Keynesian economics. The second is a brilliant chapter describing how cost-of-living adjustments in wages and government benefits have thwarted the best efforts of policy-makers to minister to our ailing economy.

—Phil Keisling

**Folded, Spindled, and Mutilated: Economic Analysis and U.S. v. IBM.** F. Fisher, J. McGowan, J. Greenwood. *MIT Press*, \$25.

**Framed: The New Right Attack on Chief Justice Rose Bird and the Courts.** Betty Medsger. *Pilgrim Press*, \$17.95.

**Free to Teach: Achieving Equity and Excellence in Schools.** Joe Nathan. *Pilgrim Press*, \$14.95. This thoughtful, front-line look at American education details many of the same problems that several national commissions on the public schools have recently addressed. As a former teacher and school administrator, Nathan offers convincing criticisms of the debilitating effects of the seniority system, the lack of performance pay and meaningful evaluation for teachers, and the over-emphasis on credentialism that pervades the educational system. His proposal for government-financed vouchers that would allow students to attend the school of their choice (public and private) is intriguing, but far more worthwhile are his personal accounts of how conscientious teachers and administrators can dramatically improve the quality of education.

—P. K.

**Gambling with History: Reagan in the White House.** Laurence I. Barrett. *Doubleday*, \$19.95. Barrett, *Time's* White House correspondent, is certainly close to the president—remember the glossy, four-color advertisement in the magazine showing him and Reagan chumming it up in the Oval Office? And though his isn't an "authorized history," Barrett was given special access to the corridors of power—an evening with the president

watching the 1982 election returns, a breakfast meeting with him and top aides.

Many of the insider stories he relates are new and fascinating—particularly those about Al Haig. Barrett goes beyond the now-hackneyed "I'm in control here" story to show Haig, Fred Fielding, and others huddled around a conference table after the assassination attempt, poring over a copy of the 25th Amendment to see if the president should be relieved of his duties. And he provides some interesting details about the events leading up to Haig's forced resignation, which culminated in Haig's telling Reagan, "I think [firing me] is dangerous and wrong".

But you have to wonder where Barrett the insider and Barrett the journalist clash. Is Jim Baker treated more kindly than Ed Meese because he does a better job, or because Barrett and Baker frequently play tennis on the White House courts on Sunday afternoons and go off on Texas fishing trips in the summer? Would Barrett still see Reagan as a courageous idealist, "gambling with history" by choosing visionary policies over pragmatic ones, had he not spent weekends with the president at Camp David?

While Barrett's is the most thorough chronicle so far of the Reagan years, it unfortunately lacks the detached perspective that makes for the best history and the best journalism.

—Douglas Jehl

**Henry Cabot Lodge and the Search for an American Foreign Policy.** William C. Widenor. *University of California Press*, \$24.50/\$8.95. Though occasionally dry and professorial, this is a healthy corrective to the popular misconception of Lodge as a calculating despoiler and a callow, scheming cynic who had only a personal vendetta against Woodrow Wilson and his League of Nations.

Widenor offers a fascinating account of how the Lodge of the

1880s and 1890s—American imperialist, tireless proponent of American naval supremacy, and cultivated, urbane cosmopolitan—would emerge in 1919 as the champion of a ragtag coalition of xenophobic middle-Westerners, America Firsters, and other backwood isolationists.

Lodge is portrayed as every bit a visionary of America's role on the world scene as Wilson was (though in an admittedly less noble way), and Widenor's portrait does much to justify Lodge's sharp impatience with his opponent's hazy romanticism.

—Hope Leman

**How to Strike It Rich in the Coming Boom.** I. Robert Parkel. *Rawson Associates*, \$13.95.

**Human Debris: The Injured Worker in America.** Lawrence White. *Seaview*, \$14.95.

**The Insanity Plea.** William Winslade, Judy Ross. *Scribner's*, \$15.95. Ross and Winslade use seven cases in which defendants were judged not guilty by reason of insanity (including that of John Hinckley) to point out the deficiencies of the insanity plea. Among their conclusions: the deterministic nature of psychiatry is "philosophically incompatible" with the belief in free will underlying our legal system, and "expert" psychiatric witnesses frequently bludgeon juries into acquittals with confusing and conflicting subjective testimony. The authors believe a psychiatrist's role in a trial should be limited to recommending treatment for a defendant rather than deciding the question of actual responsibility—a sensible and long-overdue reform.

—James Gibney

**Inside the Trojan Horse: The Odyssey of David Stockman.** Anne Urban. *Presidential Accountability Group*, \$10.50. This book is three things. First, it is a collection of sometimes superfluous and derogatory biographical details (for example, as high school quarterback, Stockman carried the team to "probably the worst [season] in the history of Lakeshore") that the author, it seems, believes foreshadowed the Stockman debacle. Se-

cond, it is a forum for the railings of betrayed supply-siders against their Judas at the OMB. Third, it is a compilation of press coverage of the 1983 budget appropriations process before and after the William Greider piece in the December 1981 *Atlantic*—and, as such, a criticism of the Reagan administration as a whole.

What this book is *not* is what Greider's piece was: a candid and revealing look at the misgivings and apprehensions of the nation's budget director. This may be because Urban never interviewed Stockman herself. (She did speak to his mother, who is quoted almost as extensively as supply-sider Jude Wanniski.) As a result, one feels that the book would be more appropriately titled, "Outside the Trojan Horse" and that a second perusal of Greider's *Atlantic* article would be more worthwhile.

—Teresa Riordan

**Inventing Motherhood: The Consequences of an Ideal.** Ann Dally. *Schocken*, \$19.95.

**Kings of the Hill: Power and Personality in the House of Representatives.** Richard B. Cheney, Lynne V. Cheney. *Continuum*, \$14.95.

**Lead Time: A Journalist's Education.** Garry Wills. *Doubleday*, \$18.95.

**Living with Nuclear Weapons: The Harvard Nuclear Study Group.** *Harvard University*, \$12.95/\$3.95.

**Miranda: Crime, Law, and Politics.** Liva Baker. *Atheneum*, \$16.95.

**The Nuclear Hostages.** Bernard J. O'Keefe. *Houghton Mifflin*, \$14.95.

**The Politics of Recovery: Roosevelt's New Deal.** Albert U. Romasco. *Oxford University Press*, \$19.95. In portraying the New Deal as a hodgepodge of often contradictory policies and programs, Romasco, like historians before him, effectively shatters the myth that FDR was the visionary architect of our modern welfare state. Roosevelt, he argues, was a political animal, and his New Deal, an ideologically inconsistent hybrid, pieced together less according to a

master plan than by the demands of the hour. He's right, but he overlooks the rest of Roosevelt—the charismatic leader, the true Democrat whose compassion for the plight of the nation spurred his search for a means toward recovery.

—D.J.

**The Reagans: A Political Portrait.**

Peter Hannaford. *Putnam*, \$19.95. One wonders why Hannaford bothered to write this book. A longtime associate of Reagan and an occasional speechwriter, Hannaford could have offered a number of new (though no doubt complimentary) insights into Reagan and his circle by dint of his insider's status. Instead, we are treated to 300 pages that retell familiar stories. At times, Hannaford seems to lapse into revisionism; for example, he insists that Reagan's famous "There you go again" line used in the October 1980 debate with Carter was purely spontaneous, even though we know from other sources that the line was tried and perfected in Reagan's mock debates with David Stockman.

—Robin Gradison

**That Damned Lawyer.** Henry B. Rothblatt. *Dodd, Mead*, \$14.95.

**The Threat: Inside the Soviet Military Machine.** Andrew Cockburn. *Random House*, \$16.95. The thesis of this witty, informative book is that the Soviet military is ridden with a corrupt and negligent officers corps, weapons that don't work, and conscripts who lack the morale, energy, sobriety, internal loyalty, or training to wage a fast-paced offensive against Western Europe (or, probably, any other territory). Cockburn, a defense journalist and documentary film maker, relies on interviews with middle-level U.S. intelligence analysts, Israeli officers who have fought against Soviet weapons in battle, and—most important—several dozen emigres who have served in the U.S.S.R.'s armed forces. From the latter come the book's most dramatic and humorous moments and its highly authentic flavor.